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The Daily Star

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NEWS BRIEFS

N'ganj Jubo Dal leader arrested

NARAYANGANJ. Sept 20: A Jubo Dal leader was arrested today on charge of various cases including murder. Baduza Man Bodu, a district leader of BNP's youth front Jubo Dal, was arrested from his residence at 12.45 this afternoon. His family members, however, claimed that Bodu was arrested while he was going to a nearby mosque to offer Jumma prayers. reports UNB.

CU exams postponed till Oct 1

CHITTAGONG. Sept 20. The authorities of the Chittagong University has decided to postpone all examinations of different academic years till October 1 due to unavoidable reasons. According to university sources, the fresh date of the examinations will be announced later, reports BSS.

Quakes hit Southern Philippines

HONG KONG. Sept 20: Two strong earthquakes shook the southern Philippines today. The Royal Hong Kong Observatory reported. It said one quake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale shook an area 270 km (169 miles) east-southeast of Cebu island at 12.15 pm (0415 GMT). The observatory earlier reported the first quake in the same area with a strength of 6.2 at 8.07 am (0007 GMT), reports Reuter.

Keshab Chandra College opens today

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH. Sept 20: Jhenidah Government Keshab Chandra College reopens tomorrow after five days of closure. The college was closed following a series of clashes between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League and Biplabi Chhatra Moftee. Earlier, a peace meeting was held in the Deputy Commissioner's office.

Fugitive held

By Staff Correspondent Police arrested KG Karim, a fugitive from Zhigatola area under Dharmundi thana in the city. Thursday. Karim was wanted in several cases, police sources said adding that he sheltered terrorists in Dharmundi area. Police said that there were allegations of collecting tolls against Karim.

Water & soil contamination may turn serious 25 lakh REB-imported poles contained over 3cr lb arsenic

Over three crore pounds of toxic arsenic compound entered into Bangladesh through the wooden electric poles imported by the Rural Electrification Board (REB) during the last two decades, official sources said here yesterday, reports BSS.

They said during the period over 25 lakh poles coated with arsenic compounds were imported and installed across the country for rural electrification.

The environment experts said that the soil and underground water at places where such poles have been installed might get severely contaminated in the long run.

According to the tender specification of the REB the poles were treated with chromated copper arsenate (CCA).

ammoniacal copper arsenic (ACA), oxide formulation only or ammoniacal copper zinc arsenic (ACZA).

REB sources said the arsenic compounds were used as preservatives to protect the poles from high temperature.

The specification said 12 pounds CCA were needed on an average to treat a ten feet wooden pole.

The sources said on an average the REB used 125 lakh poles annually.

An expert at the Atomic Energy Commission who preferred anonymity said the arsenic compounds on the poles could cause serious environmental hazards by contaminating the underground water and soil in the surrounding areas.

He said the arsenic contamination might reach a serious level in the near future.

The expert said the arsenic contamination in West Bengal was also widespread and source of this contamination was mineral resources. Because of this the arsenic contamination in West Bengal is caused in the soil under 200 to 300 feet.

But in the case of Bangladesh the arsenic contamination is found at 50 to 100 feet ground level which proved that the source of contamination is on the surface of the ground unlike West Bengal where arsenic contamination is concentrated in 14 districts. In Bangladesh the contamination is spread in several pockets.

He suggested that soil around

the installed poles should be tested to find out the level of arsenic contamination.

An official at the health directorate told BSS that arsenic contamination had been traced in the western border of the country. Besides there is an increase of arsenic contamination in the areas of Champaibawganj, Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Jessor, Pabna, Bagerhat and Satkhira.

The official said over 12 lakh people could fall victim to the arsenic contamination.

He underlined the need for extensive survey and experience to find out causes of the arsenic contamination before it got out of hand.

More than 90 per cent of the owners deviate from the RAJUK-approved plans during construction of buildings. Humayun Khadem, Chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Katripaka (RAJUK) said yesterday.

Within a month, RAJUK will crack down on unauthorised structures as well as buildings built deviating from the approved plans and start taking drastic action, the RAJUK chairman said.

The owners have got to be aware of the fact that by deviating from the building plans and using cheap and substandard building materials they are putting everyone at risk and making the buildings not sustainable," said the Chairman.

When asked whether RAJUK would make public the list of faulty and unauthorised structures prepared by a task force two years ago, the RAJUK Chairman replied, "there must be a revolutionary change in

Star Report
90pc deviate from the construction plan

Govt pledge-bound for unity among people of all beliefs: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there will not be any disturbances or fighting and conflict among people if everybody properly follows the path showed by great and noble men in different ages, reports UNB.

She said all great men like Lord Buddha, Sri Krishna, Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammad (SM) gave guidelines for religious practices and dedicated their life for peace and welfare of the people.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a function organised by the Bangladesh Buddha Krishti Prachar Sangha in connection with the inaugural of International Prayer Hall and Nikko Niyano Clinic at the Dhammarajik Mahabihar at Kamalapur in the city in the afternoon.

Hasina said that she was pledged-bound to run the country with cooperation of and understanding from all irrespective of caste, creed and political be-

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100 days in power
ALCWC meets soon to review performance

By Reaz Ahmad

The Central Working Committee (ALCWC) of ruling Awami League will meet here this week to take stock of the latest political developments in the country, party insiders said yesterday.

The meeting is being considered important as it is going to be held against the backdrop of the upcoming national council session of the party, scheduled for December next, the party's crossing 100 days in power and the main opposition party's renewed threat of launching a greater movement programme.

The ALCWC meeting may review the performance of the new government, party insiders said.

The last meeting of the ALCWC was held on July 26 which was the first after Awami League came to power after 21 years. At that meeting, the national council session of the party was deferred by three months for holding parliamentary by-elections in some constituencies and flood in the country.

Awami League president and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to chair the upcoming

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Murtaza Bhutto
hurt in gunfight
with police

By Staff Correspondent

Murtaza Bhutto, brother of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was critically injured in a clash between his supporters and police in Karachi yesterday, BBC World Service reported last night.

BBC quoted Imran Islam, Editor of The News, Karachi, as saying that at least six persons were killed and several police personnel injured during a gunbattle with Murtaza's supporters. The report did not mention why the clash took place.

Murtaza was admitted to a Karachi hospital and was in the intensive care unit, BBC said in its 1 am bulletin.

Khairuzzaman attends mother's janaza on parole

By Staff Correspondent

Major (Retd) Khairuzzaman, one of the three detained former army officers, was granted parole for about three hours yesterday to attend the janaza and burial of his mother, according to official sources.

Officials said Khairuzzaman was taken out of the Dhaka Central Jail at around 4:30 pm with light security arrangements and was taken back to the jail at around 7:15 pm.

Khairuzzaman's mother, FA Shamsunnahar (77), died at the Cardiac Institute of the Suhrawardy Hospital Thursday evening. She was buried yesterday

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Arms recovered, 16 held from Tejgaon Polytech hostel

Police in a pre-dawn raid on Latif Hall of Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute in the city yesterday arrested 16 persons and recovered one cut-rite, two rifle and huge arms manufacturing equipment, reports UNB.

Detective Branch and Tejgaon police jointly carried out the raid at about 5 am and picked up six students and 10 outsiders, said a DMP press release.

The arrested students are: M. Khaireul, Istikhar Uddin, Shariful Islam, Harun al Kaliyim, Lalimul Huq Khan and Ali Akbar. The outsiders were identified as Mahfuzur Rahman, Mostafizur Rahman, Waheduzzaman, Nazrul Islam, Rajan Das, M. Nazmul, Bashar Ullah and Noman.

US co keen to develop Bhola gas field

By Sharier Khan and Inam Ahmed

A US company, Unocal, has expressed its keenness to develop Shahbazpur gas field in Bhola and to set up a power plant there, according to Petrobangla sources.

Representatives of Unocal are already in the city and has explained to the government their operational plan for developing the gas field. The plan includes setting up of a 200 MW power plant, the sources said.

Shahbazpur gas field, discovered in November last, now remains 'sealed' as Petrobangla is still to take steps for utilisation of the gas due to lack of fund, according to a highly placed source in the Energy Ministry.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her visit to Bhola early this month announced that Shahbazpur gas would be utilised by setting up a 200 MW power plant which would meet the power requirements in the south west region of the country.

The region is heavily dependent on imported fuel-based power generation and industrial growth there is hindered

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Expansion of cabinet speculated

Star Report

Speculations in the ruling Awami League circle are ripe these days that Party Chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is going to expand her cabinet shortly.

There are also speculations about a few persons, most of them members of the Jatiya Sangsad, who are likely to be inducted into the cabinet. Some of them were even receiving congratulations in advance from the party rank and file, insiders said.

Presently, some cabinet members are holding more than one ministries. Many mid-ranking leaders of the party feel that the cabinet should be expanded for the sake of proper functioning of the government, by lessening the burden of those holding more than one or two portfolios.

The speculated names include those of Engineer Mosharraf Hossain who has just won the parliamentary by-elections in Chittagong-1 Constituency. Ashikur Rahman who has been voted to Parliament in the by-elections in Rangpur-5, Nurul Islam Nahid from Sylhet-6, Sheikh Fazil Karim Selim from Gopalganj-1 and A K M Jahangir MP. Of the non-MPs, Amir Hossain Amin is being strongly speculated about.

When contacted, most of the persons concerned, however, expressed their ignorance about

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Jatrabari bus fire case: 3 more arrested

Star Report

Three more persons charged in the Jatrabari bus fire case were arrested on Thursday, according to a police press release here yesterday.

Police carried out a raid at the Syedabad bus terminal and arrested the charged persons — Mohammad Oziul Islam, Nasir and Shoukat — who were also notorious toll collectors, the press release said.

At least eight persons were roasted alive when some miscreants torched a Noakhali bound bus, Green Star on December 4, last year soon after it had left the Syedabad bus terminal at about 11:30 pm with 31 passengers on board.

Police earlier arrested three persons — Liaqat, Sento and Abed in connection with the case. They had already confessed their involvement in the bus fire incident, said police.

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Poor performance, violation of rules DSE to delist eight companies

man.

He informed that the decision would be effective in 60 days as per the rules of the bourse.

Asked whether the move is already very late since the performance of the companies were not up to the mark for last couple of years, Husein said: "Better late than never."

On recent warning by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) about making investments in 24 listed companies, he said the DSE had warned its members about giving counsel to investors in these public companies were lacking in sound environment for investment.

He said the companies were not reporting to the DSE and did not pay listing fee for last two/three years. They were also served with notices earlier regarding their performance, but nobody responded, he added.

"We have taken the decision for the better interest of the investors. We want that no new investors are exploited and lose their confidence on the capital market," said the DSE chair-

provement of management skills by preventing 'brain drain' and encouraging 'reverse brain drain,' Karim said.

"We stand committed to making Bangladesh an investors' paradise," he added.

Hailing the present government's plan to set up private commercial banks to be more pro-active in encouraging and supporting the NRBs' investment.

The NRB Investors Forum suggested that the immigration, customs and baggage handling system at Zia International Airport be made simplified.

Replying to a question, NRB Investors Forum director Niaz Rahim said the NRBs are now investing in Latin American countries like Argentina and Bolivia due to lack of information about the investment climate of their own country.

NRBs think that there is a bright prospect to invest in software development industries and capital market sectors, said S M Quader, another director of Investors Forum.

Officials said Khairuzzaman